

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00 INRE-00

CIAE-00 PM-09 H-02 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03

RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 ORM-03 SR-02 IO-12 ACDA-19 PER-05

SCS-03 SCA-01 OPR-02 SY-10 OC-06 CCO-00 OMB-01 RSR-01

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O 141100 Z MAY 73

FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2107

DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL DHAHRAN IMMEDIATE

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY JIDDA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TELAVIV IMMEDIATE

USMISSION IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BEIRUT 5473

DEPT PASS USINT CAIRO

SITREP 16

EO 11652: XGDS

TAGS: PINS LE

SUBJECT: INTERNAL SECURITY - SITREP 16

1. AS OF 1000 Z QUIET CONTINUES PREVAIL BOTH IN BEIRUT AND
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ELSEWHERE IN LEBANON, WITH ARMY G-2 REPORTING NO INCIDENTS OR CLASHES WITH FEDAYEEN SINCE THOSE MENTIONED OUR LAST SITREP. ARMY MAINTAINS DISCREET BUT ALERT PRESENCE IN VICINITY BEIRUT REFUGEE CAMPS, AND UNITS CAN BE SEEN PATROLLING STREETS AND MANNING STRATEGIC POSITIONS (E. G., INTERSECTIONS AND ROOFTOPS) IN VARIOUS OTHER PARTS OF CITY, INCLUDING DOWNTOWN AREA. ALTHOUGH THIS ACTIVITY CAN BE ASCRIBED IN PART TO SECURITY MEASURES TAKEN IN CONNECTION WITH PARLIAMENTARY SESSION SCHEDULED THIS MORNING TO REVIEW STATE OF EMERGENCY (NOW IN ITS EIGHTH DAY), IT PROBABLY ALSO RELATED TO CONTINUING UNCERTAINTY RE FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. WE NOTE THAT, DESPITE OUTWARD SIGNS OF QUIET AND PROGRESSIVE RETURN TO NORMALITY, LOCAL POPULACE STILL CONSIDERABLY ON EDGE, AND RUMORS RE IMMINENT RENEWAL OF FIGHTING ARE CIRCULATING WITH GREATER FREQUENCY. CURFEW LIFTED HERE FOR ONLY 3 HOURS MORNING MAY 14 (DUE TO PARLIAMENTARY SESSION) BUT ARMY JUST ANNOUNCED IT WILL BE LIFTED AGAIN FROM 1300 TO 1930 LOCAL.

2. ARMY G-2 HAS CONFIRMED THAT BULK OF ARMY UNITS IN AREA SOUTH OF TYRE AND NABATIYYEH IN WESTERN SECTOR OF BORDER HAVE BEEN WITHDRAWN TO REINFORCE UNITS OPERATING ELSEWHERE. UNTSO SOURCE STATES COASTAL ROAD TO RAS NAQOURAH STILL INSECURE SOUTH OF SIDON AND THAT UNMO'S RETURNING FROM OP'S IN WESTERN BORDER SECTOR REPORT FEDAYEEN VISIBLE IN CONSIDERABLE NUMBERS ON ROADS IN THAT AREA. SOURCE ALSO REPORTS THAT SOUNDS OF INTENSE SMALL ARMS FIRE WERE HEARD CLOSE TO BORDER 0710 Z BY OP'S MARWAHIN (3306 N-3516 E) AND LABBOUNEH (3306 N-3509 E) ON SUNDAY, MAY 13.

3. PARLIAMENTARY SESSION SCHEDULED FOR MORNING MAY 14 DID NOT IN FACT TAKE PLACE, SINCE NUMBER OF DEPUTIES ATTENDING FAILED CONSTITUTE QUORUM. THIS DEVELOPMENT ALLEGEDLY DUE TO ARRANGEMENT WORKED OUT BEHIND SCENES BY PARLIAMENTARY BLOC LEADERS CHAMOUN, RAYMOND EDDE AND SAEB SALAM IN INTEREST OF AVERTING WHAT WOULD HAVE BEEN " CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY" RESULTING FROM BOYCOTT BY SUNNI MOSLEM DEPUTIES OPPOSED TO CONTINUANCE OF STATE OF EMERGENCY. UNDER THIS ARRANGEMENT STATE OF EMERGENCY WILL CONTINUE IN FORCE (ALTHOUGH ITS STRICT CONSTITUTIONAL LEGALITY WILL BE MOOT), BUT PARLIAMENTARY SESSION THAT COULD HAVE EXACERBATED CONFENSIONAL FEELINGS HAS BEEN AVOIDED. MOST SUNNI MOSLEM DEPUTIES HAVE COME OUT
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PUBLICLY FOR END TO STATE OF EMERGENCY AND WOULD HAVE TAKEN SUCH STAND HAD NATIONAL ASSEMBLY MET. GOL WOULD HAVE ACCEPTED HEAD ON POLITICAL BATTLE BUT OTHER PARLIAMENTARY LEADERS PREFERRED DUCK ISSUE.

4. PROCESSION OF LEBANESE LEADERS -- INCLUDING ERSTWHILE PRIME MINISTER HAFEZ, MEMBERS OF HIS CABINET, SALAM, FORMER PRES HELOU,

DEPUTY SABRI HAMEDEH, ETC. - TO PRESIDENTL PALACE FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH FRANGIE CONTINUED THROUGHOUT WEEKEND AND ARE GOING ON TODAY. (KAMAL JUMBLATT HAS APPOINTMENT WITH FRANGIE AT 1000 Z.) AT SAME TIME FEDAYEEN LEADERS LED BY ARAFAT ARE ACTIVE IN MEETING WITH WIDE ASSORTMENT OF LEBANESE NOTABLES, RANGING FROM CARDINAL MEOUCHI TO SUNNI MOSLEM AND LEFTIST GROUPS. SAEB SALAM APPEARS TO HAVE EMERGED AS MAIN PERSONALITY IN GOL- FEDAYEEN MEDIATION EFFORTS, OWING TO HIS PAST EXPERIENCE IN SUCH MATTERS AND FACT HE REMAINS ON GOOD TERMS WITH BOTH FRANGIE AND ARAFAT. AFTER SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH THEM MAY 13, HE GAVE ONLY CRYPTIC COMMENT ON STATE OF SETTLEMENT EFFORTS BUT SAID SITUATION WAS IMPROVING AND THAT " GOD WILLING, WE ARE ON WAY TO SAFE SHORES".

5. AIRPORT WAS BACK TO NORMAL OPERATIONS MAY 13 BUT SCHOOLS STILL CLOSED. EMBASSY PERSONNEL AND DEPENDENTS STILL SAFE, AS ARE MEMBERS AMERICAN COMMUNITY. AMERICAN JOURNALIST WAS RELEASED BY FEDAYEEN LATE MAY 12.
HOUGHTON

NOTE BY OCT: NOT PASSED CAIRO.

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